

Washington, DC -- Today, U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) announced \$97,710 through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) for the Border City Fire District in Geneva to purchase equipment to enhance first responder capabilities.

"I am pleased to announce this important grant to help the Border City Fire District continue to keep the local community safe and secure," **said Arcuri, a member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus**. "With these funds the district will be able to purchase exhaust systems for two stations and additional air packs – keeping firefighters healthy and safe on the job. In Congress, I have joined colleagues on both sides of the aisle to request increased funding for this critical grant program and will continue working in Washington to ensure that local first responders have the tools they need to protect our communities."

The Border City Fire District will use this grant to purchase venting systems for a total of seven bays at two different stations. Each venting system hooks onto the exhaust pipe of a fire truck before the truck backs into its bay - removing exhaust from the truck. By preventing exhaust from lingering in the station, the systems improve health conditions for firefighters. This grant provides funding to install venting systems in three bays at one station and four bays at another. The district will also purchase additional air packs.

"We are very appreciative of getting these grants, last year and this year," **said Walter Mumford, First Assistance Chief of the Border City Fire District**. "They have helped the fire district enormously because of rising costs of gear and air packs. This helps us out financially."

In February, Arcuri announced \$101,459 for the Border City Fire District. In August, he also announced \$72,272 for operations and safety enhancements.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) awards grants to firefighters, emergency response personnel and first responders throughout the nation to enhance response capabilities and to more effectively protect the health and safety of first responders and the citizens in their communities. AFGP grants provide resources for training, first responder health and safety programs, and response equipment and vehicles.

Since 2004, AFGP has provided a total of almost \$2.2 billion nationwide to first-responder organizations to purchase response equipment, personal protective equipment, and vehicles. In fiscal year 2007, AFGP will award approximately \$490 million directly to fire departments and EMS organizations to enhance their response capabilities.

In March, Arcuri joined 100 Members of Congress in writing to the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee requesting additional funding for the AFG Program as well as Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants that provide assistance to fire departments to increase the number of firefighters and first responders.

In June, the House passed the fiscal year 2008 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, which included a substantial increase in funding for AFGP and SAFER. The bill includes \$800 million for AFGP in fiscal year 2008.

Earlier this year, Arcuri also cosponsored the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act (H.R. 943) which would provide tax assistance for volunteer emergency responders to help area fire departments retain and recruit volunteers. The 24th Congressional District is home to a number of firehouses that rely exclusively on volunteer firefighters.

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